

Testimony on House Bill 5408

March 2, 2014

To the Energy Committee:

My wife and I understand that you have filed a bill related to tree trimming and this is to be taken up on Tuesday morning.

As Executive Committee members of the Hamden Alliance for Trees, a group that has formed to deal with the issues surrounding the United Illuminating's ETT plan and the work of PURA in deciding how this will play out in our town and neighborhoods we have been very active in trying to get a more balanced approach to this issue.

Suffice to say, we are very worried in general about the wholesale removal of trees as will happen should U.I. have their way.

We would hope and encourage you to consider strong language when it comes to regulating something as important as the *public* resources that our street trees are.

With that in mind, we would suggest the following ideas, as key components to any legislation:

1. Insist on biannual review and evaluation of the plan, including public comment, to allow for adjustments as needed
2. Require utilities to obtain written consent from property owners for removal of trees on private property
3. Improve the definitions of what is a hazardous tree and require each tree to be assessed by utilizing the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) *Basic Tree Risk Assessment Form* or similar industry-wide system. (see attached PDF)
4. Require utilities to plant a replacement tree for every tree removed
5. Require utilities to grind stumps of removed trees
6. Require that utilities provide a direct phone line to a customer service representative assigned to handle questions on (and/or objections to) tree trimming and removal
7. Create greater accountability of tree service contractors through the requirement of a performance bond
8. Allow a Town or municipalities Tree Warden to have final say to a trees fate, based not only on potential hazards, but also to the importance of or historical presence of any given tree in any given neighborhood.

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